

Appendix D - Fairfax Boulevard Master Plan Vision and Summary

*Transform Fairfax Boulevard into a combination of well-designed, walkable, lively, mixed-use **centers** joined together by commercial **connectors** in a way that enhances the existing character of the City and its neighborhoods.*

Within the Fairfax Boulevard Corridor, **Centers** would become mixed-use environments with short, walkable blocks for pedestrian activity. Scale would be moderate with building heights predominantly 2 to 5 stories. The general redevelopment of the Centers should reflect the pattern of shorter structures adjacent to the arterial streets, with building heights allowed to “step up” towards the Center’s interiors. In locations where the transition of building height is not feasible, taller structures with arterial street frontage should be set back in a manner that mitigates building height, incorporating streetscape elements with generous landscaping. Centers would include a green network of small parks, as well as other public spaces and pedestrian enhancements. Visitors would be encouraged to park once and walk to restaurants, shops, offices and residences within the Center.

Connectors would be defined by a linear, aesthetically enhanced boulevard. Most of these areas do not have the property depth or potential for unified, coordinated redevelopment. Their focus would be on lower scale buildings (predominantly 1 to 3 stories) with emphasis on accessibility, improvements in architectural and site design, and appropriate “interface” between the commercial boulevard and existing neighborhoods, such as appropriate land use transitions and green space buffers.

Fairfax Boulevard would be configured with landscaped medians, where possible, and enhanced streetscape features to encourage pedestrian activity. Slow lanes (with on-street parking), separated from the main travel lanes by landscaped medians, while not intended to be a consistent feature throughout the corridor, should be considered within or adjacent to portions of the Centers if the nature of adjacent redevelopment activity is such that those features would be appropriate.

Big Moves

The Fairfax Boulevard Master Plan provides a comprehensive strategy to guide new and infill development along the Boulevard. Fundamental to the plan is the transformation of the corridor into a classic boulevard, a walkable “great street” with sidewalks, street trees, on-street parking along local lanes (where appropriate), and street-oriented buildings. In addition, the plan recommends revisions to the land development regulations, improvements to special intersections along the Boulevard, redevelopment of strip shopping centers into town blocks, and the creation of new public spaces. These ideas, or “Big Moves”, are the main ideas that are used to implement the First Principles.

Revised Regulations

To accommodate the type of new development Fairfax citizens want along the Boulevard, the land development regulations need to be revised to focus on building form rather than just land use.

Connected Street Network

A connected street network provides multiple options for travel along the Boulevard.

Street Trees and Proper Sidewalks

Street trees and proper sidewalks along existing and new streets create desirable addresses and enhance the pedestrian environment.

Special Intersections at the Centers

The plan is organized around a series of special centers. These centers are located at key intersections where each one serves as a gateway to the City.

Strip Centers Converted Into Town Blocks

Strip shopping centers can be converted into town blocks, reintegrating retail into a traditional pattern of town streets and blocks.

New Public Spaces

Small parks and squares can be created throughout the corridor and provide unique pedestrian experiences.



Fairfax Boulevard today is a highway built primarily for cars.



Implementation of the 5+2 lane configuration (5 through lanes with local lanes on either side), where appropriate, will make Fairfax Boulevard more pedestrian-friendly, while still accommodating vehicles.



The realized vision is a true boulevard, a "great street" and community asset.

Source: Dover, Kohi & Partners, April 2008

First Principles of the Plan

Make the Boulevard a walkable "great street"

Fairfax Boulevard should be rebuilt according to a design that would transform the corridor into a community asset. The vision is to create a safe and attractive street lined with trees and pedestrian enhancements, while providing an appropriate balance for pedestrians, motorists, bicyclists and transit.

Allow change on the community's terms, with attention to appropriate size & scale

Initial planning for future development should respect the community's overall vision for the corridor. The Master Plan needs to be a "living document" that grows in response to changes in the City and region. Revising the existing land development regulations to provide for a modified form-based focus would be the best way to realize this vision.

Support a mix of uses & destinations

A mix of uses is essential to conquering transportation problems and creating sustainable, interesting and successful addresses. The corridor should support not just retail, car dealerships and hotels, but also housing, workplaces, green spaces, and civic uses.

Balance traffic capacity, safety & character

Fairfax Boulevard can be transformed into an urban street, conducive to a wide variety of economically productive uses, instead of the narrow mix of a typical suburban strip. This can be accomplished within an engineering strategy that also addresses capacity and improves safety.

Plan for feasible, phase-able pieces

Complete transformation of the corridor will not happen overnight. The plan should be accomplished in small components that can be accomplished over time as the market demands.

Enable the market

Developers can be allies. By enacting regulations that make desirable development easy, the City will encourage the type of building it hopes to see along the corridor.

Implementation Strategy

Policy Recommendations & Regulatory Changes

- Confirm physical and regulatory conditions
- Build on the Fairfax Boulevard Plan to amend Comprehensive Plan
- Revise zoning for mixed-use centers; consider the Form Based Code
- Develop the appropriate staffing infrastructure
- Streamline the development procedures and approvals process

Planning Strategy

- Focus on supporting walkability in the centers
- Maintain inventory of land uses, correlate with economic data
- Create a redevelopment targeting strategy
- Establish a parcel assembly program
- Improve transit in the corridor
- Make watershed management a community amenity
- Promote Fairfax Boulevard as a destination

Key Capital Improvement Projects

- Implement the recommended roadway and streetscape improvements
- Design and implement street grids, particularly in centers
- Construct public parking

Economic Development Strategy

- Develop strategies for retail, office, housing and parking
- Establish a program for pilot projects
- Establish public-private partnerships
- Actively target retail tenants for newly created street frontages

Funding Mechanisms

- Consider Tax Increment Financing
- Research and apply for grants
- Consider tax credits, revolving funds, and small business investment groups
- Explore Economic Development Authority bonding opportunities

Fairfax Boulevard Master Plan

Vision and Summary

Illustrative Plan

